

REMARKS

Applicants have considered the outstanding official action. It is respectfully submitted that the claims are directed to patentable subject matter as set forth below.

A certified copy of European Patent Application No. 00401192.0 filed April 28, 2000 is being submitted herewith. Applicants claim priority of the application under the provisions of 35 U.S.C. §119, more explicitly set forth at 37 C.F.R. §1.55.

Restriction has been required under 35 U.S.S. §121 as between Group I, claims 1-10 drawn to an absorbent paper product; Group II, claims 11-14 drawn to a method of making an absorbent paper product; and Group III, claims 15-20 drawn to apparatus.

Applicants confirm the earlier election of claims 1-10. Applicants have now canceled non-elected claims 11-20. Applicants reserve the right to file divisional application(s) as to the subject matter of non-elected claims 11-20.

The outstanding rejections are as follows:

- (1) Claim 4 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite with regard to what direction "inward" is supposed to be; and

(2) Claims 1-10 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b), or in the alternative §103(a), over Schulz (U.S. Patent No. 4,320,162).

Initially applicants note that claims 1-10 have been rewritten as claims 21-30 respectively.

As to the §112 rejection, claim 4 has been rewritten as claim 24. Claim 24 specifies that the narrowest parts of the embossing patterns point inwardly between the at least two plies. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claim 24 is definite as to the direction in which the narrowest parts extend. Withdrawal of the §112 rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim 1 has been rewritten as claim 21. Claim 21 is directed to an absorbent product including at least two superposed plies of a format with edges, a peripheral zone along the edges and a central zone enclosed by the peripheral zone. The plies are joined together, without glue, by marking patterns at least along a segment of the peripheral zone. Further, at least one of the at least two plies has an embossing pattern in the central zone. Applicants submit that Schulz does not teach or suggest an absorbent product as claimed by applicants.

Schulz teaches a multi-ply sheet structure wherein each of a pair of plies has a first pattern of relatively deep embossments joined at distal portions thereof to the

opposite ply, and a second pattern of relatively shallow embossments surrounding the embossments of the first pattern (column 1, lines 62-68). The sheet structure is provided by a pair of embossing rolls and an adhesive applicator. Schulz does not teach or suggest at least two superposed plies mechanically joined by marking patterns along at least a segment of a peripheral zone, in particular wherein a central zone of at least one of the at least two superposed plies has an embossing pattern. Schulz does not contain any teaching or suggestion of providing distinct peripheral and central zones, in particular as including different features as claimed. Schulz simply teaches embossing of plies. No marking pattern is applied thereto in any manner much less in a manner as claimed by applicants. According to the definitions set forth in the captioned application at page 1, embossments are considered distinct from markings. In Schulz, both plies are joined together by adhesive. Applicants' claimed invention calls for the joining of the at least two superposed plies by marking without glue.

Accordingly, Schulz does not teach each and every element of the claimed invention and provides no suggestion for modifying the multi-ply sheet of Schulz to obtain the claimed invention. Thus withdrawal of the §102 and §103 rejection based on Schulz is respectfully requested.

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Reconsideration and allowance of the application
is respectfully urged.

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachment - Priority Document